

## OHIO PUBLIC TRANSIT ASSOCIATION

### Bill Information

#### **HB3** AISHA'S LAW - DOMESTIC VIOLENCE *(BOYD J, CARRUTHERS S)*

To add domestic violence circumstances to the offenses of aggravated murder and endangering children, to establish local domestic violence high risk teams, and to require law enforcement officers to utilize a qualified lethality assessment screening tool to refer high risk victims to a local team.

##### CURRENT STATUS

9/16/2020 - Senate Judiciary, (First Hearing)

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#### **HB27** PUBLIC MOTOR VEHICLE LIABILITY *(INGRAM C)*

To modify political subdivision liability for an employee's negligent operation of a motor vehicle.

##### CURRENT STATUS

3/19/2019 - House Civil Justice, (Third Hearing)

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#### **HB48** LOCAL GOVT ROAD IMPROVEMENT FUND *(GREENSPAN D)*

To provide for a new Local Government Road Improvement Fund for local governments to fund road improvements.

##### CURRENT STATUS

2/12/2019 - Referred to Committee House Finance

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#### **HB51** UNDIVIDED HIGHWAY RUMBLE STRIPS *(GINTER T)*

To require the Ohio Department of Transportation to install rumble strips along the center line for all two-way, undivided state highways with a speed limit exceeding 45 miles per hour, as a part of specified highway projects.

##### CURRENT STATUS

12/11/2019 - Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce, (Second Hearing)

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#### **HB54** LGF TAX REVENUE INCREASE *(CERA J, ROGERS J)*

To increase the proportion of state tax revenue allocated to the Local Government Fund from 1.66% to 3.53% beginning July 1, 2019.

**CURRENT STATUS**

2/12/2019 - Referred to Committee House Ways and Means

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**HB78 PREVAILING WAGE-PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS** *(RIEDEL C, MANCHESTER S)*

To allow political subdivisions, special districts, and state institutions of higher education to elect to apply the Prevailing Wage Law to public improvement projects.

**CURRENT STATUS**

12/11/2019 - House Commerce and Labor, (First Hearing)

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**HB92 VOTE ON COUNTY SALES TAX** *(ANTANI N, SMITH J)*

To require voter approval of any increase in the rate of a county sales tax.

**CURRENT STATUS**

3/13/2019 - House State and Local Government, (First Hearing)

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**HB93 PUBLIC TRANSIT INVESTMENT** *(SKINDELL M, UPCHURCH T)*

To make appropriations related to public transportation.

**CURRENT STATUS**

3/5/2019 - Referred to Committee House Finance

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**HB116 TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH** *(BRINKMAN T)*

To make an appropriation related to transportation planning and research.

**CURRENT STATUS**

3/12/2019 - Referred to Committee House Finance

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**HB148 YIELD TO PARALLEL PARKERS** *(BRINKMAN T)*

To require drivers to yield the right of way to any other vehicle that is parking in or exiting an angled or parallel parking space on a public road.

**CURRENT STATUS**

4/2/2019 - House Transportation and Public Safety, (First Hearing)

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## HB187 TAX ISSUES-AUGUST *(MERRIN D, WIGGAM S)*

To prohibit local tax-related proposals from appearing on an August special election ballot.

### 📌 CURRENT STATUS

4/10/2019 - Referred to Committee House State and Local Government

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## HB202 ELECTRIC VEHICLE INFRASTRUCTURE *(SMITH K, WEINSTEIN C)*

To establish the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Study Committee.

### 📌 CURRENT STATUS

10/1/2019 - House Transportation and Public Safety, (Fourth Hearing)

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## HB295 ELECTRIC SCOOTERS *(HOOPS J)*

To establish requirements governing low-speed electric scooters.

### 📌 CURRENT STATUS

2/12/2020 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED & REPORTED OUT**, Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce, (Sixth Hearing)

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## HB309 ASSAULT-TRANSIT OPERATOR *(DENSON S, PERALES R)*

To increase the penalty for assault when the victim is an operator of an Ohio transit system bus or rail car; to authorize Ohio transit systems to post a sign regarding abuse or assault of staff; and to increase the penalty for evading payment of the known fares of a public transportation system.

### 📌 CURRENT STATUS

2/20/2020 - House Criminal Justice, (First Hearing)

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## HB369 SEXUAL, GENDER DISCRIMINATION *(HILLYER B, SKINDELL M)*

To enact the Ohio Fairness Act to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity or expression, to add mediation as an informal method that the Ohio Civil Rights Commission may use, and to uphold existing religious exemptions under Ohio's Civil Rights Law.

### 📌 CURRENT STATUS

2/4/2020 - House Civil Justice, (Second Hearing)

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## HB382 PROHIBIT INCOME TAX-MUNICIPAL NONRESIDENTS *(JORDAN K)*

To prohibit municipal corporations from levying an income tax on nonresidents' compensation for personal services or on net profits from a sole proprietorship owned by a nonresident.

### 🚩 CURRENT STATUS

11/6/2019 - Referred to Committee House Ways and Means

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## HB384 PERMITTING STOP SIGN REQUESTS *(BOGGS K, LELAND D)*

To permit a local resident, neighborhood association, or neighborhood organization to request the erection of a stop sign at an intersection and to support a request for a lower prima-facie speed limit on certain streets and highways.

### 🚩 CURRENT STATUS

6/2/2020 - House Transportation and Public Safety, (Second Hearing)

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## HB468 HANDHELD ELECTRONIC DEVICE WHILE DRIVING *(LIGHTBODY M)*

To alter the law governing the use of a handheld electronic wireless communications device while driving.

### 🚩 CURRENT STATUS

5/19/2020 - **BILL AMENDED**, House Transportation and Public Safety, (Second Hearing)

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## HB499 MOTOR FUEL TESTING PROGRAM *(KELLY B, LANG G)*

To authorize a county to implement a motor fuel quality testing program.

### 🚩 CURRENT STATUS

5/19/2020 - House Transportation and Public Safety, (First Hearing)

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## HB501 ANIMAL-DRAWN VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS *(WIGGAM S, KICK D)*

To clarify the law governing slow-moving vehicles and to revise the lighting and reflective material requirements applicable to animal-drawn vehicles.

### 🚩 CURRENT STATUS

6/2/2020 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED**, House Transportation and Public Safety, (Second Hearing)

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## HB510 CRIMINAL PENALTIES - VEHICLE SAFETY *(PATTON T)*

To increase the criminal penalties associated with failing to secure a load on a vehicle.

🚩 **CURRENT STATUS**

3/10/2020 - Referred to Committee House Criminal Justice

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**HB546** **REGISTRATION FEES - ELECTRIC VEHICLES** (MILLER J, WEINSTEIN C)

To alter the definitions of "plug-in electric motor vehicle" and "hybrid motor vehicle" under the motor vehicle law and to halve the additional registration fees for those two types of motor vehicles.

🚩 **CURRENT STATUS**

6/2/2020 - House Transportation and Public Safety, (First Hearing)

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**HB550** **MOTORCYCLE SAFETY EDUCATION** (HOOPS J)

To make changes to the laws related to the motorcycle safety and education program.

🚩 **CURRENT STATUS**

6/2/2020 - **BILL AMENDED**, House Transportation and Public Safety, (Second Hearing)

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**HB566** **INCREASE LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUND DISTRIBUTION** (ROGERS J, CROSSMAN J)

To increase the percentage of revenue to the General Revenue Fund distributed to the Local Government Fund and to declare an emergency.

🚩 **CURRENT STATUS**

5/5/2020 - Referred to Committee House Finance

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**HB570** **OPEN BIDDING DURING COVID-19** (BOGGS K)

To allow a county to purchase public health-related items and communication equipment without competitive bidding, solicit bids electronically, and open bids during a meeting held electronically during the period of the emergency declared by Executive Order 2020-01D, issued on March 9, 2020, and to declare an emergency.

🚩 **CURRENT STATUS**

5/5/2020 - Referred to Committee House State and Local Government

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**HB581** **ADDRESS COVID-19 CONCERNS** (CALLENDER J)

To address immediate concerns related to COVID-19.

🚩 **CURRENT STATUS**

5/5/2020 - Referred to Committee House Health

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## **HB582** MAKE APPROPRIATIONS, REAPPROPRIATIONS *(CALLENDER J)*

To make appropriations for the biennium ending June 30, 2021, and capital reappropriations for the biennium ending June 30, 2022.

### **CURRENT STATUS**

5/5/2020 - Referred to Committee House Finance

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## **HB593** REQUIRED PAID LEAVE - COVID-19 *(BOYD J, BOGGS K)*

To require paid leave for an employee who is unable to work due to quarantine or mandatory isolation, to create a grant program to compensate contract workers who cannot perform services during public health emergencies, to make an appropriation, and to declare an emergency.

### **CURRENT STATUS**

5/5/2020 - Referred to Committee House Commerce and Labor

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## **HB600** AMBULANCE LICENSE EXPANSION *(BLAIR G, O'BRIEN M)*

To authorize a person who has had a valid commercial driver's license to drive an ambulance during the state of emergency due to COVID-19 and to declare an emergency.

### **CURRENT STATUS**

5/5/2020 - Referred to Committee House Transportation and Public Safety

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## **HB601** MATHEW'S LAW *(PERALES R)*

To enact Matthew's Law, requiring public buildings to have at least one rest room facility with an adult changing station and authorizing an income tax credit for installation.

### **CURRENT STATUS**

6/9/2020 - House State and Local Government, (First Hearing)

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## **HB606** CIVIL IMMUNITY - COVID-19 TRANSMISSION *(GRENDALL D)*

To grant civil immunity to a person who provides services for essential businesses and operations for injury, death, or loss that was caused by the transmission of COVID-19 during the period of emergency declared by Executive Order 2020-01D, issued on March 9, 2020.

### **CURRENT STATUS**

9/14/2020 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**

## HB609 TEMPORARY TAX AMNESTY PROGRAM *(WEST T)*

To require the Tax Commissioner to administer a temporary amnesty program from August 1, 2020, to December 31, 2020, with respect to delinquent state taxes and fees, and to repeal Section 1 of this act on January 1, 2021.

### ■ CURRENT STATUS

9/22/2020 - **BILL AMENDED**, Senate Ways and Means, (Second Hearing)

## HB615 PROTECTIVE BARRIERS - SCHOOL BUSES *(SOBECKI L, MILLER J)*

To authorize the installation of protective barriers in school buses, to require the Director of Public Safety to adopt rules related to the barriers, and to declare an emergency.

### ■ CURRENT STATUS

5/26/2020 - House Transportation and Public Safety, (First Hearing)

## HB671 PUBLIC HEALTH ORDER LIMITS *(ABRAMS C, STEPHENS J)*

To establish limits on certain public health orders issued by boards of health and the Department of Health, to prohibit a licensing authority from taking disciplinary action against a licensee for engaging in permitted activities during a pandemic, and to declare an emergency.

### ■ CURRENT STATUS

6/9/2020 - House State and Local Government, (Fourth Hearing)

## HCR17 EXPAND SNAP TO STRIKERS *(SOBECKI L, RUSSO A)*

Urging Congress to expand Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program eligibility to include the households of striking workers.

### ■ CURRENT STATUS

2/11/2020 - House Health, (First Hearing)

## HCR21 OHIO LOVES TRANSIT DAY *(LEPORE-HAGAN M, GREENSPAN D)*

To declare February 14, 2020, as "Ohio Loves Transit Day" and encourage all Ohioans to participate in the events taking place across Ohio during the week of and on February 14, 2020, to celebrate the importance of public transit in Ohio.

### ■ CURRENT STATUS

1/28/2020 - House Transportation and Public Safety, (First Hearing)

## **HCR31** DECLARE RACISM PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS *(HOWSE S, CRAWLEY E)*

To declare racism a public health crisis and to ask the Governor to establish a working group to promote racial equity in Ohio.

### **CURRENT STATUS**

6/3/2020 - Referred to Committee House State and Local Government

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## **SB132** GAS TAX-LOCAL GOVERNMENT ALLOCATION *(WILLIAMS S)*

To modify the amount of revenue derived from any increase in the motor fuel tax rate that is allocated to local governments and to change the manner in which that revenue is divided between municipal corporations, counties, and townships.

### **CURRENT STATUS**

5/1/2019 - Referred to Committee Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce

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## **SB134** PASSING SCHOOL BUSES *(GAVARONE T)*

To make changes to the law governing passing a school bus, to create a new offense for vehicular homicide and vehicular assault related to improperly passing a stopped school bus, to make an appropriation, and to designate this the School Bus Safety Act.

### **CURRENT STATUS**

5/19/2020 - House Criminal Justice, (First Hearing)

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## **SB285** DISTRACTED DRIVING *(O'BRIEN S, KUNZE S)*

To revise the laws relative to distracted driving and the use of an electronic wireless communications device while driving.

### **CURRENT STATUS**

9/22/2020 - Senate Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs, (Third Hearing)

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## **SB291** ELECTRIC VEHICLE FEES *(LEHNER P, HOTTINGER J)*

To provide for the proration of the plug-in electric and hybrid motor vehicle registration fees.

### **CURRENT STATUS**

5/6/2020 - Referred to Committee Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce

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## **SB293** OPEN MEETINGS LAW COMPLAINTS *(MANNING N, BLESSING III L)*

To create a procedure within the Court of Claims to hear complaints alleging a violation of the Open Meetings Law.



**CURRENT STATUS**

8/31/2020 - Referred to Committee House Civil Justice

**SB299 REQUIRE PAID LEAVE** (CRAIG H)

To require paid leave for an employee who is unable to work due to quarantine or mandatory isolation, to create a grant program to compensate contract workers who cannot perform services during public health emergencies, to make an appropriation, and to declare an emergency.

**CURRENT STATUS**

5/6/2020 - Referred to Committee Senate Finance

**SB307 SALES TAX EXEMPTION-PPE** (GAVARONE T)

To authorize a temporary sales and use tax exemption for personal protective equipment and to declare an emergency.

**CURRENT STATUS**

6/9/2020 - Senate Ways and Means, (Second Hearing)

**SB308 CIVIL LIABILITY-EMERGENCY SERVICES** (HUFFMAN M)

To revise the law governing immunity from civil liability and professional discipline for health care providers during disasters or emergencies, to provide qualified civil immunity to service providers providing services during and after a government-declared disaster, and to declare an emergency.

**CURRENT STATUS**

6/10/2020 - Referred to Committee House Civil Justice

**SB310 FEDERAL COVID FUNDING** (DOLAN M)

To provide for the distribution of some federal coronavirus relief funding to local subdivisions, to make an appropriation, and to declare an emergency.

**CURRENT STATUS**

6/10/2020 - Consideration of House Amendments; Senate Does Not Concur, Vote on Emergency Clause 10-22

**SB322 NON-RECOURSE CIVIL LITIGATION ADVANCES** (WILSON S)

To amend the law regarding the non-recourse civil litigation advance business.

**CURRENT STATUS**

6/10/2020 - Referred to Committee Senate Judiciary

## SB348 LOCAL BOARDS OF HEALTH *(SCHAFFER T, ROEGNER K)*

To prohibit local boards of health from using certain threatening words in notifications to the public, to allow local boards of health to reject Department of Health orders during an emergency, to allow health care professionals who serve on a board of health to receive continuing education credit, and to change the makeup of local boards of health.

### ■ CURRENT STATUS

9/1/2020 - Referred to Committee Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid

## SB350 PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION VOUCHERS FOR STUDENTS *(BRENNER A)*

To prohibit school districts from providing vouchers for public transportation to students enrolled in grades kindergarten through eight for the 2020-2021 school year.

### ■ CURRENT STATUS

9/23/2020 - Senate Education, (Third Hearing)

## SJR3 REQUIRE SUPERMAJORITY-INCOME TAX INCREASE *(BURKE D)*

Proposing to enact Section 7 of Article XII of the Constitution of the State of Ohio to require that any increase in income tax rates be approved by a supermajority of the membership of each house of the General Assembly.

### ■ CURRENT STATUS

6/9/2020 - **REPORTED OUT**, Senate Ways and Means, (Sixth Hearing)

## Week in Review

### ADDICTION/SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Saturday, Oct. 24 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. is this year's National Prescription Drug Take Back Day meant to address a crucial public safety and public health issue. The 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health showed 9.9 million Americans misused controlled prescription drugs and that a majority of abused prescription drugs were obtained from family and friends, often from the home medicine cabinet, according to the federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Drug take Back Day is meant to give people the opportunity to dispose of any unwanted, unused or expired prescription medications in their homes. Those wishing to participate can find a collection site near them at <https://takebackday.dea.gov/>.

### APPALACHIA

Ohio could stand to gain more than a quarter million jobs and decrease unemployment due to the pandemic by investing in clean energy jobs, according to a report released Tuesday by the ReImagine Appalachia Coalition in partnership with Policy Matters Ohio and the Keystone Research Center. During a virtual press conference, the coalition reviewed findings from the Political Economy Research Institute's (PERI) economic and job creation analysis of the ReImagine Appalachia blueprint for both Ohio and neighboring Pennsylvania. The report projects Ohio could gain over 235,000 jobs and Pennsylvania 250,000 jobs every year for the next 10 years by investing in clean energy.

### ARTS, SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Members of the Ohio Arts Council Wednesday approved a new rule that would allow council Executive Director Donna Collins to send federal CARES Act dollars to arts groups that have already been vetted by the council and are awaiting funding. While CARES Act

dollars have not yet been designated for use by arts groups, Gov. Mike DeWine mentioned in a recent media briefing that he recognizes the importance of arts institutions in the state and intends to appropriate coronavirus relief funds to support the arts.

## **CHILDREN/FAMILIES**

At Tuesday's virtual meeting of the Commission on Infant Mortality, members heard a presentation from the Ohio Domestic Violence Network (ODVN) regarding how domestic violence can contribute to poor birth outcomes. Micaela Deming, staff attorney and policy director for ODVN, outlined statistics about the intersection of the two issues, saying that women who were hospitalized for physical assault while pregnant experienced risks of low birth weight, preterm birth and infant mortality that were eight times higher than risks experienced by pregnant women who were not hospitalized for physical assault.

Members of Gov. Mike DeWine's Early Childhood Advisory Council spent their Wednesday meeting hearing updates from several state agencies with the focus on programs affecting children. Sarah LaTourette, executive director of Ohio Family and Children First, began the meeting with a presentation on supports for children using multiple state services, or multi-system youth. This would include, for example, a child involved in the juvenile justice system and who has a developmental disability.

Responding to the drop in vaccination rates in children amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM) said Monday it is working with the five Medicaid managed care organizations (MCOs) to launch new initiatives meant to increase vaccination rates. ODM said the efforts are part of a series of population health initiatives designed to reduce COVID-19 spread, address unintended consequences of COVID prevention protocols and make use of telehealth to extend care access.

## **CORONAVIRUS**

"These numbers are grim; they are going to wrong direction. Everything is going the wrong direction. But we know what will work. We've done this before," Gov. Mike DeWine stressed repeatedly over the week as Ohio's coronavirus cases continued to increase with the number of new cases setting records on Saturday, Wednesday and Thursday, when the state reached 2,425 new cases and a total of 190,430 cases since the pandemic began. Tuesday saw hospitalizations increase by 216 -- also a record.

Dr. Anthony Fauci and Bill Gates both expressed optimism that there will be a way out of the pandemic Monday, as the two gave remarks at the National Academy of Medicine (NAM) annual meeting. Fauci is director of the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, while Gates co-chairs the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation supporting global health efforts. In regard to therapeutic treatments, Fauci said the NIH has an international panel to develop guidelines, providing updated information to clinicians around the world on treating COVID-19. Investigational drugs are being "actively tested," he said, and they have found some successful results already.

The DeWine administration will soon launch a registration portal for medical providers who would like to administer the anticipated coronavirus vaccination, having recently submitted a draft plan to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for how it would distribute vaccines, Gov. Mike DeWine said Tuesday. Ohio's interim draft plan anticipates four phases of vaccine distribution.

While the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) once again reported a record number of daily COVID-19 cases, there is "still time" for the state to avoid another round of business shutdowns and hospital restrictions, Gov. Mike DeWine said during his coronavirus briefing on Thursday. "We don't have to go there. We do not have to be there. We do not have to be in that situation. We can control this if we get 90 percent, 85 percent of people wearing masks, keeping the distance and using good common sense about the spread. We can avoid this. We can turn this around. It's multiplying very quickly, and it will continue to do that unless we do something differently. Doing something differently is just more of us wearing masks, and more of us being careful. We've done it twice before. We can do it again," DeWine said.

## **CRIME AND PUNISHMENT**

Ohio Democratic leaders touted SB3 (Eklund-O'Brien), a bill that would reduce penalties for low-level drug offenses, Monday during a panel discussion of Just Mercy, a 2019 film that details the true story of Walter McMillian (Jamie Foxx), a Black man wrongfully sentenced to death in 1987 who was eventually freed with the help of a young defense lawyer, Bryan Stevenson (Michael B. Jordan). The discussion, hosted by Represent Justice and the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus (OBLC), was moderated by OBLC President Stephanie Howse (D-Cleveland) and featured Sens. Sandra Williams (D-Cleveland) and Hearcel Craig (D-Columbus), Rep. Erica Crawley (D-Columbus), as well as Just Mercy Executive Producer Scott Budnick and Represent Justice Ambassador Tyra Patterson.

## **EDUCATION**

The Capitol Square Foundation announced that it's offering free online resources for teachers, students and families to better understand headlines and how governments work amid the health and economic challenges of 2020, as well as the presidential election. The resources were created in partnership with iCivics, a civic education nonprofit founded by the late U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, and Ohio State University's John Glenn College of Public Affairs. They are intended to align to Ohio's academic content standards and tied to Ohio's history and constitution. The resources are designed for use both remotely and in classrooms, reflecting the nature of education during the pandemic. They are available at [www.icivics.org/teachers/oh](http://www.icivics.org/teachers/oh).

Groundwork Ohio released its newest report, "The Workforce Behind the Workforce: Advancing the Early Childhood Education Profession in Ohio's Child Care System" on Tuesday. The report explores state data on early childhood education professionals in Ohio, identifies the biggest challenges to advancing the profession, and identifies opportunities to better support early childhood

educators in child care settings, the group said.

An Ohio Supreme Court case on the qualifications required for an employee to go armed on school grounds is drawing heavy interest from other parties, with amicus briefs filed by Attorney General Dave Yost, Ohio's two teachers' unions, the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) and two of Ohio's largest cities, among others. Justices decided this summer to take up *Gabbard v. Madison Local School District Board of Education*, in which a group of parents is challenging Madison Local's decision to authorize concealed carry by school staff in the wake of a school shooting at its junior-senior high building. The Butler County district prevailed at trial, but the 12th District Court of Appeals sided with the parents. The Supreme Court stayed the appellate ruling while it considers the case.

Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow (ECOT) founder William Lager is asking the trial court in the state's case against him to drop several counts, arguing the alleged conflicts of interest in school vendor contracts were never mentioned in 17 state audits of the school only to be "conveniently raised during a statewide election." Lager and ECOT vendor Altair Learning Management recently filed a motion for summary judgement on the state's allegations about improper spending on vendor contracts with Altair, IQ Innovations, Third Wave Communications and Third Wave Communications & Media; his liability for that improper spending; and his breach of fiduciary duty to ECOT, among other charges.

## **ELECTIONS**

Early voters left voiceless when their candidate withdraws from a crowded primary, candidates who prevail with relatively narrow support because of partisan gerrymandering, ballots seen as "wasted" on third party contenders -- these and other problems can be ameliorated by the use of ranked-choice voting (RCV), according to participants in a Cleveland City Club forum Wednesday. In a ranked-choice voting system, voters mark not only their preferred candidate but their second choice, third choice and beyond. Failure by any candidate to get a majority of votes triggers an instant run-off, where trailing contenders' votes are apportioned to other candidates based on the additional preferences marked by voters, until a true majority winner is selected.

## **ELECTIONS 2020**

Times for Ohioans seeking to vote early in person expanded this week with early voting locations at boards of elections across the state open on Saturday, Oct. 24 and Saturday, Oct. 31 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday, Oct. 25 and Sunday, Nov. 1 from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. From Monday, Oct. 26 through Friday, Oct. 30, early voting locations will be open from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Early voting is also available on Monday, Nov. 2 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

More than 1.1 million Ohioans have already cast their ballots with 14 days to go until Election Day, Secretary of State Frank LaRose announced Tuesday. The number of ballots cast is 119 percent the rate seen in 2016, when 509,829 Ohioans had voted early at this point, according to the Ohio Secretary of State's Office.

Ohio Secretary of State (SOS) Frank LaRose outlined Friday the process under which county boards of elections will report results following Nov. 3. Consistent with state law, this will occur twice -- "once when the county boards of elections upload their unofficial results to the secretary of state's office and again after each county completes its official canvass results and are certified by the Ohio secretary of state."

Requirements for recounts, post-election ballot curing, post-election audits and other actions were also set in the directive

The pandemic response, health care and tax and energy policies were all discussed during Friday's debate between candidates for the 15th Congressional District, U.S. Rep. Steve Stivers (R-Columbus) and Democrat Joel Newby, that was hosted by the Columbus Metropolitan Club. WOSU Chief Content Director Mike Thompson moderated the event.

Former Ohio Supreme Court justices and a municipal court judge-turned-law professor deconstructed the recent candidate forum for Ohio's two Supreme Court races and discussed the role of the judiciary and Ohio's process for electing judges during a Cleveland City Club discussion Monday. Former Justices Judith Ann Lanzinger and Yvette McGee Brown and retired Cleveland Municipal Judge Ronald Adrine, now jurist-in-residence at the Cleveland-Marshall College of Law, spoke at the virtual forum, moderated by the Statehouse News Bureau's Karen Kasler. Kasler was also moderator of the recent forum featuring this year's Supreme Court candidates: Justices Sharon Kennedy and Judith French and their respective challengers, Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Judge John O'Donnell and 10th District Appeals Judge Jennifer Brunner.

U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and former Republican Gov. Bob Taft -- both past Ohio secretaries of state -- held a joint press call to promote voting in the general election, now less than two weeks away. They also discussed the need for more young people to serve as poll workers this year. A PSA on that subject featuring Brown and Taft was released Wednesday as well.

Veterans of legislative and statewide ballot battles unpacked the dynamics of the 2020 election Thursday, weighing the effects of President Donald Trump's polarizing nature, the pandemic's disruption to traditional campaigning and shifting suburban sentiments. ZHF Consulting convened the panel of well-known players: veteran lawmaker Ron Amstutz, who served as speaker pro tempore and budget chairman in the House and is now senior adviser at ZHF; Scott Borgemenke, former gubernatorial policy advisor and chief of staff for both House and Senate Republicans, now with the Ohio Hospital Association; former Rep. Dan Dodd, vice president at ZHF; former Republican Attorney General Betty Montgomery; and former Ohio Democratic Party Chairman Chris Redfern. Beau Euton of First Harvest Consulting moderated the discussion.

While voters registered as Democrats in Florida and Alaska have reportedly recently received emails threatening them to "vote Trump or else," Ohioans have not been affected so far, Secretary of State Frank LaRose said Wednesday night. The Federal Bureau of

Investigation (FBI) and U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced Wednesday evening that Iran is behind the spoofed emails, which seek to interfere in the presidential election between President Donald Trump and former Vice President Joe Biden. The sender appeared to be affiliated with the Proud Boys, a far-right extremist group with ties to white supremacists, but federal law enforcement officials said Iranian digital influence specialists were the true source of the threats. U.S. intelligence officials said Russia has also been working to interfere in the election, just as it did in 2016.

While the Ohio House Democratic Caucus (OHDC) reported raising the most in 10 years ahead of the upcoming general election, House Republicans brought in over twice that at \$3.77 million to the OHDC's \$1.7 million. The Republican Senate Candidate Committee (RSCC) also outraised its Democratic counterpart. Fundraising efforts were closer in the two Ohio Supreme Court races.

With 12 days until the election, an all-time high of 53,981 Ohioans have signed up to serve as a poll worker on Tuesday, Nov. 3, Secretary of State Frank LaRose announced Thursday. This includes 23,140 Democratic poll workers and 20,206 Republicans.

House candidate Mehek Cooke and Republican officials are alleging "harassment" by Denver Liston, husband of incumbent Rep. Beth Liston (D-Dublin). Cooke said she has filed a police report over the matter.

With less than two weeks until Election Day, amid unprecedented levels of misinformation and allegations of fraud regarding Ohio's election system, and ahead of the Wednesday night announcement from federal security officials, the Ohio Association of Election Officials (OAE) announced that it has launched a new website "to help set the record straight. OhioBallotFacts.org has interviews with election officials, news articles, academic studies and other materials to reassure Ohio voters that ballots will be counted accurately and fairly," the group explained in a news release.

## **EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT**

The state unemployment rate dropped to 8.4 percent in September, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) said Friday, down from 8.9 percent in August. ODJFS said the number of workers unemployed in Ohio in September was 472,000, down from 510,000 in August. The number of unemployed has increased by 232,000 in the past 12 months from 240,000, and the September unemployment rate is up from 4.1 percent in September 2019. The U.S. unemployment rate for September was 7.9 percent, down from 8.4 percent in August and up from 3.5 percent in September 2019.

## **ENERGY/UTILITIES**

House members divided over HB6 (Callender-Wilkin) repeal efforts can end statutory subsidies charged to all electric ratepayers for nuclear and "legacy" coal plants while retaining sharp cuts to energy efficiency (EE) and renewable portfolio standards (RPS) under the controversial bill -- a third option to previous repeal legislation that could draw sufficient supporters for a passing vote. The newly introduced and yet-to-be-heard HB772 (Romanchuk) also scraps all billing mechanisms enacted prior to or in conjunction with HB6 to "decouple" electric distribution utility (EDU) base rates from actual revenue needs; requires all decoupling charges and coal-plant subsidies to the Ohio Valley Electric Corporation (OVEC) to be refunded immediately; and bars the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) from enacting new decoupling or OVEC charges, including those benefitting FirstEnergy.

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) rejected the Ohio Manufacturers' Association's (OMA) efforts to halt customer costs supporting the state's two nuclear plants Wednesday, saying the OMA Energy Group had wrongly suggested the commission could ignore the Legislature's statutory directive in HB6 (Callender-Wilkin) to enact a billing charge on all electric customers effective Jan. 1, 2021. Mounting litigation and administrative proceedings targeting FirstEnergy, former House Speaker Larry Householder (R-Glenford) and the shadowy 501(c)(4) Generation Now do not relieve PUCO of its legislative mandate, commissioners said.

The state utility watchdog says FirstEnergy must prove it did not divert customer payments to former House Speaker Larry Householder (R-Glenford) and the shadowy 501(c)(4) Generation Now, instead of merely denying "political or charitable" cost-shifting, and did not collect "significantly excessive earnings" in 2018-2019 that would force it to provide residential and commercial consumers a major refund. The former parent company of Ohio's two nuclear plants is seeking a protective order from the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) to shield it from the Ohio Consumers' Counsel's (OCC) attempts to depose FirstEnergy executive Santino Fanelli on his Sept. 30 statement denying use of ratepayer proceeds to lobby for energy subsidy bill HB6 (Callender-Wilkin).

Because the Ohio House Energy Policy and Oversight Select Committee has yet to consider public testimony on efforts to repeal energy subsidy bill HB6 (Callender-Wilkin), environmental groups held the first of three planned remote "hearings" to discuss the scandal-plagued law on Wednesday. "It has been three months to the day since the news broke of an alleged \$61 million bribery scandal spearheaded by former Ohio House Speaker Larry Householder (R-Glenford) surrounding HB6. Even before the scandal became front page news, HB6 was widely opposed by Ohioans because it bailed out nuclear and coal plants at a cost of over \$1 billion to Ohio consumers, puts 114,000 clean energy jobs at risk and strips away the clean energy program that has protected Ohioans' health during this pandemic," said Tracy Sabetta, Ohio state field organizer for Moms Clean Air Force and host of the virtual hearing.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

Gallia and Meigs counties will be in attainment for all National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) if the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (USEPA) latest proposal regarding the Southeast Ohio counties is finalized.

Two air quality improvement projects were approved during a recent Ohio Air Quality Development Authority (OAQDA) board

meeting. The agency approved up to \$422,570 in bond financing for businesses in Knox and Summit counties to purchase and install energy-efficient equipment.

## **FEDERAL**

U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) joined veteran state lawmaker and former Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Director Rick Hodges in a press conference Tuesday with co-litigant Jim Obergefell of the U.S. Supreme Court's same-sex marriage ruling to sound the alarm over Judge Amy Coney Barrett's nomination to the high court. They said Court conservatives could seek to roll back housing, health and family protections for LGBTQ persons if Barrett is confirmed. If confirmed, Barrett's influence on the Supreme Court could come as early as oral arguments in *Fulton v. City of Philadelphia*, in which Catholic Social Services (CSS) is arguing its First Amendment rights to exclude same-sex partners as foster parents. *Fulton* goes before the Court one day after the Nov. 3 General Election.

Addressing reporters Tuesday, U.S. Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) outlined additional federal relief he believes is necessary due to the pandemic and voiced concerns the rising level of cases could lead to another shutdown of Ohio businesses and further strain hospitals. Portman said an additional "targeted" federal funding package is needed to provide further support, as well as lifting the requirement that previously allocated CARES funds must be spent by the end of the year. More money for testing, vaccine development and therapeutic treatment is also needed, he added.

## **GAMING/GAMBLING**

Ohio Casino Control Commission tax revenues were above estimates for the first quarter of FY21 by \$307,000, Operations Director Rick Anthony told the commission Wednesday.

## **GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE**

House Speaker Bob Cupp (R-Lima) appointed Rep. Alessandro Cutrona (R-Canfield) to the Legislature's ethics oversight panel, the Joint Legislative Ethics Committee (JLEC), on Friday. Cutrona replaces former Speaker Larry Householder (R-Glenford), whom lawmakers voted to remove from the panel following his indictment on federal corruption charges via an amendment to HB66 (Merrin) which the governor signed earlier this month.

The speech and hearing lobby pushed back Monday on proposed Medicaid rules requiring an annual office visit for patients otherwise treated by telehealth. The Ohio Speech and Hearing Governmental Affairs Coalition (OSHGAC) told the Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review (JCARR) that an in-person mandate appears to contradict House-passed standard-of-care provisions in HB679 (Fraizer-Holmes).

Lame duck Rep. Bernadine Kennedy Kent (D-Columbus) is mounting another bid for redress after the Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP), Columbus City Attorney's Office, and former House Speaker Larry Householder's (R-Glenford) office found her Statehouse encounter with Minority Caucus staff last year did not amount to criminal intimidation, unlawful restraint and/or obstructing official business. Kent, whom the House Democratic Caucus voted to remove after she allegedly wrote Columbus Mayor Andrew Ginther on signed Ohio Legislative Black Caucus (OLBC) letterhead without members' knowledge, filed for a writ of mandamus in the Ohio Supreme Court Tuesday against OSHP Supt. Col. Richard Fambro

seeking statutory damages, attorney fees and costs and a Court order for the highway patrol to document her victims' rights under R.C. 2930.04(A).

## **GOVERNOR**

Gov. Mike DeWine's signed HB8 (Manchester-Galonski) Tuesday afternoon. According to the governor's office, the bill, which goes into effect in 90 days, modernizes foster care training by offering

greater flexibility to respond to foster caregiver needs, as well as helping to better recruit and retain foster parents.

Gov. Mike DeWine announced Thursday the signing of SB163 (Kunze), legislation that began as a license plate bill but was amended to include provisions on prorating plug-in electric and hybrid motor vehicle registration fees; modifications to the law that reduces Local Government Fund (LGF) distributions to subdivisions that use traffic cameras; and reimbursement to subdivisions that do not operate traffic cameras for LGF penalties the subdivisions may have incurred.

## **GREAT LAKES**

The Great Lakes support more than 1.3 million jobs that generate \$82 billion in wages annually, according to a new analysis of 2018 economic data by Michigan Sea Grant. The coastal counties of the eight Great Lakes states produce 21 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in the region and 5.8 percent of the U.S. GDP, says the report, "The Dynamic Great Lakes Economy: Employment Trends from 2009 to 2018." The study analyzed the status and trends for all employment sectors between 2009 and 2018 across the 83 coastal counties in the eight states along the Great Lakes' border -- Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

## **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

Ohio's rate of vaccination is relatively low compared to other states, according to data aggregated by financial advising website WalletHub. Ohio ranked 34th in the nation in an overall aggregate analysis of its vaccination rates, and 40th in the nation for its vaccination rates of children and teenagers.

Meanwhile, Massachusetts received the highest marks, followed by Vermont and New Hampshire, while Mississippi reported the lowest vaccination rates, followed by Georgia and New Jersey.

## **HIGHER EDUCATION**

Ohio Wesleyan University (OWU) President Rock Jones recently announced the university plans to eliminate 18 majors, including journalism, as well as consolidate several departments. In a letter to OWU students and families, Jones said the university conducted a "rigorous review" of the entire academic program over the last 12 months and the Board of Trustees has approved changes that include creating some new academic departments, merging others, and discontinuing some majors. Effective Dec. 19, 2020, the university will no longer accept students into the following majors: journalism, biochemistry ACS, chemistry ACS, comparative literature, computational neuroscience, dance, earth science education, earth sciences, geology, German, HHK health promotion, Middle Eastern studies, planetary science, pre-optometry, pre-public administration, pre-theology, religion, and urban studies. They will also will no longer accept new students into the Bachelor of Music program.

Ohio State University (OSU) announced recently that this fall it begins operating its own laboratory to process COVID-19 tests taken by asymptomatic students, faculty and staff on campus. The university said the move will likely save millions of dollars, make test results more quickly available and make the testing process more efficient.

Ohio Dominican University (ODU) has received a \$1 million gift from the Encova Foundation of Ohio to establish an endowment fund that will provide scholarship support for students who study in ODU's Risk Management and Insurance (RMI) program. The gift was announced during a ceremony that took place on Wednesday at Ohio Dominican.

## **HOUSING/HOMELESSNESS**

September home sales were 18.1 percent above activity seen a year earlier, while year-to-date sales are slightly above last year's activity, according to Ohio Realtors. The state notched 15,851 sales in September, versus 13,421 a year earlier. Sales for the first nine months of the year reached 118,287, 0.5 percent ahead of the 117,706 seen at this point of 2019.

## **IMMIGRATION**

Immigrant children, particularly those still learning to speak English, face multiple barriers to education despite laws requiring they be given access, according to a conversation between activists Friday.

"Ohio Immigrants and Refugees: Lived Experiences, Mobilizing for Change" is a four-part virtual series on immigration in Ohio sponsored by Ohio State University's (OSU) Office of Diversity and Inclusion, along with Advocates for Basic Legal Equality (ABLE), the Ohio Immigrant Alliance, and with support from the Four Freedoms Fund. Friday's session focused on education.

## **JUDICIAL**

The Ohio Supreme Court announced a new guidebook Monday addressing guardianship for people with developmental disabilities. The "Guardianship of Individuals with Developmental Disabilities Toolkit" surveys state laws and rules on less-restrictive alternatives, considerations during an investigation, common challenges when working with the developmentally disabled and related topics. The toolkit can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/y6n6aaop>. Hard copies are available on request from the Court's Children & Families Section at [cfc@sc.ohio.gov](mailto:cfc@sc.ohio.gov) or 614-387-9385.

The U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee voted Thursday morning to send 7th Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the full Senate for consideration as President Donald Trump's nominee to replace the late U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. The vote itself was over quickly, as Senate Democrats had decided to boycott the vote in protest of the process.

## **LIQUOR/ALCOHOL**

Ohio's liquor enforcement agents had another busy weekend citing pubs and restaurants for alcohol curfew violations and failing to enforce state-mandated masks, socially distanced dancing and the like. Nine bars face a mix of penalties including possible fines and loss or suspension of their liquor licenses.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) has started construction to address abandoned mine land (AML) hazards and to create recreation space in Jefferson County. Once complete, the Friendship Park Highwall Reclamation Project will offer a safe place for recreation and increase tourism to the area, according to ODNR.

Ring-necked pheasant hunters have the chance to pursue the popular game bird when the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Wildlife (DOW) releases more than 14,000 roosters at 28 of Ohio's public hunting areas in late October and November. According to the department, DOW will release pheasants on the following dates:

- Oct. 24-25 (first youth weekend)
- Oct. 31-Nov. 1 (second youth weekend)
- Friday, Nov. 6, 2020 (opening day)
- Wednesday, Nov. 11, 2020 (Veterans Day)
- Thursday, Nov. 26, 2020 (Thanksgiving Day)

## **PENSIONS**

President Donald Trump signed a memorandum Thursday directing Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and Labor Secretary Eugene Scalia to review the pension problems faced by salaried retirees of the defunct Delphi Corp., an auto parts supplier. After Delphi's bankruptcy and the collapse and bailout of the automotive sector, unionized employees' pensions were preserved by a deal with General Motors, but that did not cover salaried and non-union employees.

## **PEOPLE**

The Ohio Consumers' Counsel has renominated legal aid veteran Ellis Jacobs of Dayton to the Board of Directors of the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC). Jacobs has represented low-income and at-risk consumers on the USAC board since 2009, sitting on its High-Cost/Low-Income Committee along with other duties.

The Cleveland-based Center for Community Solutions (CCS) recently presented its John Begala Award for Public Service to U.S. Rep. Marcia Fudge (D-Cleveland) and Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) Director Kimberly Hall. According to CCS Board of Directors Chairman Carter Strang, these two "inspirational women" have shown "an extraordinary commitment to ensure Ohioans can access food and nutrition services via the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP]."

Conservatives for a Clean Energy Future (CCEF) recognized state Sen. Stephanie Kunze (R-Hilliard), Reps. David Greenspan (R-Westlake) and Gary Scherer (R-Circleville), and Paulding County Commissioner Roy Klopfenstein as 2020 Clean Energy Champions.

## **PUBLIC SAFETY**

Ohio law enforcement agencies meeting state standards for use of force, including deadly force, and agency recruitment and hiring added Fairfield Township Police Department (Butler County) to their ranks with Monday's announcement by the Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS). The Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS) division has certified 463 agencies to date. They employ more than 92 percent of all Ohio peace officers under policing best practices issued by the Ohio Collaborative Community-Police Advisory Board. Another 21 departments are pursuing accreditation.

## **STATE GOVERNMENT**

The Ohio Department of Commerce (DOC) announced Thursday that its Division of Real Estate and Professional Licensing has awarded \$73,846 in grants to 45 Ohio cemeteries as part of the FY21 Cemetery Grant Fund.

Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) Executive Director Cheryl Lyman reported Thursday that the commission has supported small businesses with nearly \$75 million. Each year the Ohio Department of Administrative Services (DAS) is required to report to the General Assembly on the Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) Program and the Encouraging, Diversity, Growth and Equity (EDGE) Program. Lyman said there's a statewide goal for EDGE participation of 5 percent, but the commission had expenditures of 9.5 percent with its EDGE vendors, which was a little over \$74.7 million in supporting small businesses.

## **TRANSPORTATION/INFRASTRUCTURE**

While commercial vehicles have been traveling on the Ohio Turnpike at higher year-over-year rates the last few months, the persistent passenger vehicle reduction and other pandemic-related problems have continued to negatively affect the toll road's finances, officials said Monday. Passenger vehicle miles traveled have improved from their low in April but continue to lag commercial travel, Ohio Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission (OTIC) Deputy Director/CFO Martin Seekely said during the commission's monthly meeting. In addition to toll revenues being down due to the pandemic, concession sales and investment income have also dropped significantly in 2020, Seekely said.

The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) has started its annual inspection of nearly 300 plow trucks across Central Ohio to prepare for the winter season. Crews at the ODOT Hilliard Outpost spent the morning going through a 150-point inspection list, aiming to make certain that every truck is running and ready to go. These preseason checks also allow crews to address any issues before the equipment is actually needed, officials told reporters during a socially-distanced press conference in a garage. The department is also focusing on training for workers to protect each other from COVID-19, ODOT Highway Management Administrator Shawn Rostorfer said.

## **WORKERS' COMPENSATION**

The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) announced this week that it will begin sending out \$1.34 billion in dividend checks Friday, Oct. 23 with 178,425 private and public employers slated to receive checks and account credits in the second dividend round. BWC previously sent out \$1.6 billion in dividend checks in April to help offset economic damages caused by the pandemic.